

IN THE CLAIMS:

The text of all pending claims, (including withdrawn claims) is set forth below. Cancelled and not entered claims are indicated with claim number and status only. The claims as listed below show added text with underlining and deleted text with ~~strikethrough~~. The status of each claim is indicated with one of (original), (currently amended), (cancelled), (withdrawn), (new), (previously presented), or (not entered).

Please CANCEL claims 1, 4, 5, 8, and 11-19 and AMEND claims 2, 6 and 9 in accordance with the following:

1. (cancelled)

2. (currently amended) ~~The~~ An information collection apparatus according to claim 1, which collects information via transmission paths from a plurality of information generation apparatuses, wherein each of said information generation apparatuses has a generation-side information storage unit which stores the information generated by said information generation apparatuses due to a specific generation factor, said information collection apparatus comprising:

a table storage unit which stores a priority definition table in which respective priorities of said plurality of information generation apparatuses are defined;

an information collection unit which refers to the priority definition table upon reception of a notice from an information generation apparatus that is any of said information generation apparatuses and in which an amount of information stored on said generation-side information storage unit of said information generation apparatus has reached a predetermined amount, where if the priority of said information generation apparatus is higher than a preset priority the collection unit responds to the notice by collecting the information stored on the generation-side information storage unit of said information generation apparatus, and where if the priority of said information generation apparatus is lower than the preset priority then the collection unit disregards the notice and does not perform collection for the notice;

a collection-side information storage unit which stores the information collected by said information collection unit; and

further comprising a substitution control unit which allows any one or more of said information generation apparatuses to act as a substitute to execute the operation of collecting information, that is supposed to be executed by said information collection unit, when a given

error has occurred.

3. (original) The information collection apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said substitution control unit allows an information generation apparatus out of said information generation apparatuses with the lowest priority to act as the substitute, to execute the operation of collecting information.

4. (cancelled)

5. (cancelled)

6. (currently amended) The An information collection apparatus according to claim 4, which collects information via transmission paths from a plurality of information generation apparatuses, wherein each of said information generation apparatuses has a generation-side information storage unit which stores the information generated by said information generation apparatuses due to a specific generation factor, said information collection apparatus comprising:

an information collection unit which, upon reception of notices sent from corresponding information generation apparatuses based upon an amount of information stored on corresponding said generation-side information storage units, responds to notices from information generation apparatuses with priorities higher than a preset priority by collecting stored generated information from such information generation apparatuses, and responds to notices corresponding to information generation apparatuses with priorities lower than the preset priority by disregarding such notices by not collecting stored generated information from respective information generation apparatuses;

a collection-side information storage unit which stores the information collected by said information collection unit; and

further comprising a substitution control unit which allows any one or more of said information generation apparatuses to act as a substitute to execute the operation of collecting information, that is supposed to be executed by said information collection unit when a given error has occurred.

7. (original) The information collection apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said

substitution control unit allows an information generation apparatus out of said information generation apparatuses with the lowest priority to act as the substitute, to execute the operation of collecting information.

8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) An ~~The~~ information collection apparatus according to claim 8, which collects information via transmission paths from a plurality of information generation apparatuses, wherein each of said information generation apparatuses has a generation-side information storage unit which stores the information generated by said information generation apparatuses due to a specific generation factor, said information collection apparatus comprising:

an information collection unit which, upon reception of a notice sent from an information generation apparatus in which a given error has occurred and from which the notice has been sent responsive thereto, collects information stored on the generation-side information storage unit of said information generation apparatus if the priority of said information generation apparatus is higher than a preset priority and disregards the notice by not collecting the information stored if the priority of said information generation apparatus lower than the preset priority, where the information generation apparatus may be any of the information storage apparatuses;

a collection-side information storage unit which stores the information collected by said information collection unit; and

~~further comprising~~ a substitution control unit which allows any one or more of said information generation apparatuses to act as a substitute to execute the operation of collecting information, that is supposed to be executed by said information collection unit, when a given error has occurred.

10. (original) The information collection apparatus according to claim 9, wherein said substitution control unit allows an information generation apparatus out of said information generation apparatuses with the lowest priority to act as the substitute, to execute the operation of collecting information.

11. (cancelled)

12. (cancelled)

13. (cancelled)

14. (cancelled)

15. (cancelled)

16. (cancelled)

17. (cancelled)

18. (cancelled)

19. (cancelled)